

In Memoriam:

Edward Judson

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In Memoriam:
Edward Judson

A Sermon Preached in the Memorial Baptist
Church, Washington Square, New
York City, on the First Sunday
of November, 1914

By

JAMES MANNING BRUCE



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"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." *Rev. xiv. 13.*

OF missionary father missionary son, Edward Judson came thirty-three years ago to the lower west side of New York, with a consecration as exalted, a self-surrender as unreserved as Adoniram Judson's in going to Burma two-thirds of a century before.

I do not propose this morning to rehearse the history of Edward Judson's ministry in New York. To many of you that is as familiar as it is to me. Some of you shared in that service from its beginning to its end.

Neither a formal biography of our Pastor, nor a history of his work, would be appropriate to the time, or congenial with our feeling this morning. The natural thing in such a service as this, so soon after his departure, is that we should gather up

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and bind into a memorial sheaf our reminiscences of Edward Judson's pastorate of the Berean and the Memorial Church.

You know how it began: with a great sacrifice unostentatiously made, and carried on, with never a murmur or sign of regret, to the end of his life.

Coming to New York from Orange, as pastor of the almost defunct Berean Church, at the corner of Bedford and Downing streets, he fixed for the salary he would accept precisely one half of that he had been receiving; instead of five thousand dollars he chose to take twenty-five hundred, and he lived on that, in a modest Ninth Ward flat.

Besides this pecuniary sacrifice, he made a social sacrifice not less conspicuous. He virtually cut himself off from the opportunities which New York society presented to him, and urged him to share. We often talk about the social privations of the foreign missionary, removed, as he must necessarily be, from the advantages of community life in a civilized and Christian country. I have thought many times that such privations, once for all faced and accepted, do not involve the same perpetual exercise of self-denial as that self-imposed upon Edward Judson and his family in New York. They surrendered, not once for all by actual physical separation, but day in day out, year after year, through a generation, the legiti-

mate enjoyments and advantages brought constantly within their reach by the culture and hospitality of the metropolis of the United States.

I say Edward Judson, and his family; for we ought not to forget that, when he made his sacrifice for himself, he had to make it for his wife and two little girls as well. A man's self-denial is doubly hard and heroic when he must ask those he loves to share it. Mrs. Judson from the first, and her daughters as they grew into girlhood and young womanhood, not only faced the sacrifice demanded of them, but brought their own gifts of music and varied efficiency to the church's service.

Beyond the pecuniary and social sacrifices of Edward Judson in his New York mission, there was the supreme sacrifice of personal ambition. Not only might he have continued indefinitely his brilliantly popular ministry at Orange, but also, as the years advanced he might have had his choice of the most distinguished places our denomination can offer to its ministers. It would be idle to say that he did not care for these proffered honors. He estimated to the full all they meant in the way of splendid recognition and magnificent opportunity. He did not lightly and easily put them aside. What he did, was to hold fast, against them all, to his early, arduous choice, even when it seemed to bring nothing but disappointment of his hopes and failure of his efforts. As Robert

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Browning bravely declared himself, in his latest printed words, Edward Judson was

“One who never turned his back, but marched
breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
wrong would triumph.

Held, we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.”

There are three aspects under which I wish to group our reminiscences of our illustrious Pastor:

- I. THE MAN
- II. THE GENIUS
- III. THE CHRISTIAN

The Man

FULL-ORBED, many-sided humanity was the essence of Edward Judson's nature, the ground out of which his manifold powers grew, the element that gave to all of them their unique quality and sway.

Because he was so normally and wholesomely human, he had a matchless gift of *sympathy*. It gave him a vicarious imagination. He put himself in the place of people who were in any trouble and who came to him for comfort. In a true sense, he bore their griefs and carried their sorrows. Sympathy means *suffering with*, and only that enables us to understand and help. That was the sympathy our Pastor gave.

Akin to his capacity for sympathy was his gift of *appreciation*. Nothing could exceed his generosity in discerning and estimating and applauding merit. I remember a sermon of his on the text "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." It was the most genial enforcement of the duty of expressing kindly feeling, of telling people ungrudgingly that you were pleased with them. If you like a sermon, *say so* to the preacher. If you admire a

picture, *say so* to the painter. If you have enjoyed a song, *say so* to the singer. If you find a mother who sweetens a humble home and makes its life gentle and fine in narrow conditions, with meagre resources, and if you think she is doing a rare and beautiful thing, *say so*, and make her glad with your sympathetic praise.

The same spirit toward God is a large part of the utterance of religion. All our best worship, all our most acceptable giving of thanks, our *Te Deums*, our hymns of *Gloria in Excelsis*, are just *saying so* to God. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

And no preacher could have practised what he preached more perfectly than Edward Judson practised and exemplified his own doctrine of *saying so*.

It is a matter of course that he had the *social instinct* in fullest development. He liked people. He was a man, as the old Latin poet said of himself, and nothing human was alien to him, or failed to interest him. He was at home with everybody, and put everybody at ease. His church sociables were not sociables in name only; his very presence made the name a delightful reality. He had a talent for winning love because he had a talent for loving. He brought out the good in people because he believed in them and made them feel he did.

He could not have been the man he was, he could not have done the work he did, nor kept his

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heart so cheerful amid so much that was sad and often tragic, without his inextinguishable *sense of humor*. No droll thing escaped him. He never missed the sudden gleam of fun that flashes through gloom and, for a moment, relieves it. He loved wholesome merriment and a hearty laugh. He believed there was a tonic contagion in laughter and he often disseminated it. He loved a good story and relished it all the better if it was at his own expense. His quick wit sparkled in the give-and-take of good-natured chaffing; he knew how to say the right thing even in fun. Somehow, this reminds me of a church supper to which our beloved Berean woman, Mrs. Burdge, of the popular Varick Street bakery, had sent some of her famous mince pies. She was among those who served the tables at the supper and, passing where he sat, she said, perhaps with something of the successful author's pride, "Well, Dr. Judson, how does the mince pie taste?" And, with the radiating smile that so literally made his face to shine, he flashed back, "Why, Sister Burdge, I guess it tastes like another piece."

Not only everybody in his congregation, but the whole neighborhood, knew that wonderful, irresistible smile of his. Years ago, soon after we came to the new church, there was published in some New York weekly a commonplace enough story of a young girl who had lost her poor little job, and

was sitting, in pretty perilous desperation, on a bench in Washington Square. As she happened to look up, the illuminated cross on the Judson Memorial tower caught her eye. It was like a beacon that beckoned to her. She obeyed its invitation. Rising, she walked across the Square to the beautiful, bright, warm church. And there, at the door, stood the welcoming pastor who "*smiled her in.*" Before that evening service ended the despairing girl found the help and hope that saved her. How many souls were gently led into the light and love of God by Edward Judson's smile!

Of course, our Pastor had human flaws, as well as extraordinary human graces. A character so strong and masterful as his could not fail to have possibilities of quick, sharp temper. But, after all, his anger was, as Shakespeare puts it, like the fire of the smitten flint, that "shows a hasty spark, and straight is cold again." It was the inevitable defect of his qualities. But it was not often in evidence.

He had a remarkable power of sarcasm and he used it on occasion with scathing effect. Perhaps, sometimes, he was betrayed into using it carelessly, and people were puzzled and hurt. But he had himself, as a rule, surprisingly in hand and tried, mostly with success, to keep the watch set at the door of his lips. We knew he meant to, always.

We knew he was thinking of himself as well as of us when he prayed, as he did so often, and as we liked to hear him pray, "Help us to be decent, *and to keep sweet.*"

When the subject warranted, and he gave utterance to righteous wrath, his invective was tremendous. I shall never forget how, one evening in the Berean church he denounced the frequent inhuman cruelty of drunkards. After describing it with blistering vividness, he broke out: "I am tired of being asked to sympathize with the poor inebriate who cannot help getting drunk and does not know when he behaves with bestial brutality. My sympathy is for his victims, the wife he beats and bruises, and the children he tortures and sometimes maims or cripples for life. I will tell you what I wish might be done. I wish that by ordinance of our city government a whipping-post might be set up, say at the corner of Carmine and Bleecker streets, and that every time a drunken man was caught beating his wife he might be lashed to the whipping-post and publicly flogged on his bare back till the blood ran! I don't believe there is a drunkard of them all but *could* help getting drunk if he knew he was going to be shamed and hurt like that!"

Oh, he was a grandly, all-round, human man, this Pastor we loved so long and now have lost.

The Genius

It is no extravagance to say that Edward Judson was a man of genius. Everyone who knew him recognized this. And his was an opulent and diverse genius.

To begin with, he had a genius for *teaching*. The career of a teacher was that which he first laid out for himself and to which he devoted nine years after his graduation from Madison, now Colgate, University. He was a born teacher and all his life he continued to teach because he loved to, even after God's providence led him into the ministry as his accepted profession. He could not fail to be, and always was, a teaching preacher, though he was a notably popular one as well. He proved that these two kinds of efficiency in the ministry need not be mutually exclusive.

He began early to gather in his study groups of young men—some of them theological students who served him as helpers, others again city-mission workers, or youthful pastors—with whom he discussed next Sunday's sermon, all agreeing to use the same text, each in his own way. He had informal classes of enthusiastic students. Sometimes they assembled in a summer camp, coming and going according to the limits of vacation.

He kept up, himself, a systematic study of the Bible. Every year he read it through in English, once at least, often twice. In addition he was accustomed, when circumstances permitted, to read portions of Scripture every day in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French and German. Like all real teachers, he never ceased to learn, and his was therefore, to the very last a growing and expanding scholarship. He was always abreast of the times, always up to date, in philosophic and religious thought.

You know that in recent years he did regular service as Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology in the Divinity School of Colgate University, and as Professor of Baptist History and Polity at Union Theological Seminary in this city. From 1903 to 1905 he was head of the department of Homiletics at the University of Chicago. His teaching was definite, logical, scrupulously accurate and of a compelling earnestness. It demanded faithful study and clear thinking from his students. Every one of them had occasion to say—and to say gratefully—as he recalled the work Professor Judson exacted:

“For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
And purged its faith and trimmed its fire,
Showed me the high, white star of truth,
There bade me gaze and there aspire.”

Nor should mention fail to be made of the choice literary quality of his work, in preaching and teaching and, not less, in the great amount of writing that he did. His club papers and various other essays were of a rare and original excellence and, in form, of matchless grace. His letters, even his dictated letters, had a singular and quite individual charm. They were always good literature. Hundreds of them must have been preserved, and will be cherished for that quality, as well as for their warmth and sweetness of sentiment.

It was an extraordinary phenomenon of mental endowment that a man of such conspicuous literary and pedagogic aptitudes as Edward Judson should have possessed, in equal degree, the faculty of leadership and organization which he showed in creating and developing his great people's church. He had the true genius of leadership because his leadership was inspiration. People who really wanted to do something counted it a privilege to work under him. All great and successful leaders must be masterful—sometimes even domineering. But our Pastor's leadership was not more marked by ineluctable assertiveness than by tactful non-interference. He knew how to let sincere and faithful workers alone, even when their methods did not meet with his full approval.

He had a singular, I think we might safely say unique, talent for making plans and working

them out. Dr. Schauffler, the eminent director of Presbyterian city mission work in New York, said that Dr. Judson was the greatest planner he ever knew, could frame in a day more plans than any dozen other men could think of in a year.

It goes without saying that not all of his plans succeeded. And he discarded them as cheerfully when they failed as he tried them eagerly when they first came up in that fertile brain of his. Some of you will remember the friendly girding of dear, beautiful, benignant George Alexander, who came to the University Place Presbyterian Church soon after Edward Judson came to the Berean Baptist. At the meeting held here in December, 1913, in connection with the observance of the Judson Centenary, Dr. Alexander, who, arriving a little late, fairly embraced our Pastor in affectionate greeting, told how, as he began his New York work, he proposed one scheme and another to his elders. To each proposition they objected, "Oh, Judson tried that and gave it up long ago." I can see Dr. Judson's smile and hear his laughing voice as he presently retorted: "Dr. Alexander is quite right. I am well aware that I have been an awful warning to all the ministers in this part of the town, and in other places, too."

"That which takes my fancy most," says Emerson, "in men of the heroic class, is the good humor and hilarity they exhibit. It is a height

to which common duty can very well attain, to suffer and to dare with solemnity. But these rare souls set opinion, success and life at so cheap a rate, that they will not condescend to take anything seriously; all must be as gay as the song of a canary."

Have you ever made, or seen, any count of the vast scope and multitudinous variety of our Pastor's activities in this downtown parish of his? I cannot do more than catalogue its features, so far as I am able to recall them.

I want, at the beginning of my calendar, to point out the remarkable fact that more than thirty years ago, in that old brick barn of a church building at Bedford and Downing streets, with its basement on the street level and its galleried auditory upstairs, Edward Judson evolved a complete institutional church, long before that name, which he never chose and rather disliked, was known or thought of.

He established, so far as I am aware, the first mission of an individual church among the foreign-speaking people of New York. It was for the French, who at the time he began his work in the Ninth Ward were more numerous there than any other foreigners. He had, I believe, the first church kindergarten that existed in the city. He had boys' clubs and girls' clubs. He had a singing school which formed a large chorus choir. He was

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a learned hymnologist and gave much personal attention to the church music. He had afternoon and evening gymnastic classes. He had a men's lodging-house, a stone's throw away, at the lower end of Sixth Avenue, which was filled every night, and where he or some of the rest of us led daily evening prayers, with a brief evangelistic talk. He had in the church cellar a wood-yard, where men who were really down and out could saw and split logs enough to earn themselves supper and lodging and breakfast; and where the shirkers and fakers could be screened out. He had systematic house-to-house visitation, of which he did his own full share; and he made more than one neighborhood canvass, with careful tabulation of the results.

Most of these activities were transferred to the new church. Here, with increased space, a second kindergarten was added. A well-appointed gymnasium had its evenings for men, and its afternoon classes, with expert direction, for boys. There was a large evening class in calisthenics for women and girls, so capably managed by Mrs. Judson that it paid its own expenses.

There was a populous, and very popular, sewing school on Saturday mornings, led, through several winters, by Mrs. Anna Louise Cary Raymond. There was even, for a time, a story hour for boys on Saturday afternoons, out of which

there grew later a weekly, early-evening Children's Hour.

During one winter of severe cold and general unemployment a Mothers' Meeting was carried on, where from 150 to 200 women earned, by sewing, groceries enough to tide many families over the bitter season. At each of these weekly gatherings a musical or literary entertainment, or an interesting and helpful talk was given.

A well-equipped dispensary, with the valuable coöperation of four competent physicians, was maintained for several years. During one winter the basement rooms it occupied in the afternoon were devoted, on two evenings of each week, to a pedicure clinic, in which some 1800 treatments were given to the suffering feet of work-people quite unable to pay the ordinary charges of a chiropodist.

Every summer there was a flower mission. An ice-water fountain, always on tap, was installed at the corner of the church. During one summer of prolonged heat we knew of a young girl who came to our fountain every morning at five o'clock to fetch water for her sister dying of consumption in a stifling near-by tenement. For many years a large Fresh Air work was done every summer in sending children, working girls, and mothers with babies, into the country. Each party generally had a two-weeks outing, but in special cases the time was often extended beyond that limit.

A Children's Home was maintained, at first in the lower stories of the tower and afterwards at Somerville, New Jersey, where it is still doing its beneficent service.

Cordial relations were established, and have never ceased, between our church and the Washington Square Home for Friendless Girls, originally next door to the Hotel Judson, but now located on Eighth Street near Fifth Avenue. Many of its former inmates are today faithful members of our church.

I am by no means sure that my hasty catalogue embraces all the forms of the wide-spreading ministry of help which our great-souled Pastor, with the perpetual and indefatigable industry of his genius, devised and put in operation.

His aim was to touch the community and to meet its needs at as many points as possible—and, to do this in an utterly disinterested spirit, neither demanding nor expecting, for the church, any direct return, even in the way of coming to the services. These activities went on without interruption and, in a sense, under the Pastor's direction, during those periods—alas, too many and too long!—when he was making his tours of what he aptly and whimsically called *finangelization*. Wherever he went, whatever else crowded his time and thought, there came upon him daily the care and responsibility of all that concerned his

church in Lower New York. His absences gave him no rest from his labors there. Frequent letters of generous praise and of helpful suggestion brought to his fellow-workers at home the reminder of his love and interest and filled their hearts with his cheer of faith and patience of hope.

What these strenuous tours achieved you can see by looking about you in this noble church, and at the adjoining group of buildings. The church itself embodies, though as yet incompletely because still unfinished in respect of its interior decoration, Edward Judson's great idea of giving to the poor, *where they live*, the best in architecture, in sculpture, in mural painting and in the stained glass of windows; as well as the best in preaching, in music and in Sunday-school training.

A notable feature of his enterprise, which gave evidence of his genius in finance, as in so many other directions, was the conception and materialization of a large and, at the time, wholly novel business enterprise, the successful prosecution of which for fifteen years has been the church's financial salvation. It is probably the first instance on record, a prominent New York business man declared, of a Baptist Church going into business with the result of lucrative and sustained success, instead of speedy, irretrievable disaster.

I think you must have noticed, in our hurried superficial survey of Edward Judson's New York

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career how notably his was pioneer work. And he had the pioneer spirit—the indomitable pluck of the true pioneer, his scorn of hardship, his blazing ambition, which became in Judson a quenchless and selfless aspiration, an inextinguishable divine fire of zeal and love and faith. I seem to hear him exclaim:

“Not for delectation sweet; not the cushion and
the slipper;
Not the riches safe and palling,
Not for us the tame enjoyment,
Pioneers, O pioneers!”

The Christian

WE have not much time left to think of Edward Judson in the supreme aspect of his character and life—as a Christian. But, after all, everything we have tried to gather up in our memories of him grows out of and discloses that deepest and ultimate fact of his being, that tap-root of all his qualities and powers, that perennial spring of his spiritual vitality.

I have emphasized two of his great guiding ideas: the idea of a church giving freely and quite unselfishly the widest possible service to the community about it; and, the idea of a church giving to the poor, what they cannot have in their homes, the best art, the highest beauty. Who shall dispute that these are the ideas of an outstanding, inspired Christian? In Edward Judson's mind they were associated with a third, and more distinctly religious, principle for the right conduct of what is called an institutional church: to wit, that its *religious* purpose should ever be its first, chief purpose, never overshadowed, overlapped, crowded out, or pushed aside, by its philanthropic aims and appliances. It is not easy to

keep this principle always to the fore, to hold such an attitude without concession or capitulation.

And that is what Edward Judson never failed to do. From the time he began his missionary service in New York, almost until his death, a religious meeting of some kind has been held in his church every evening, not excepting Saturday. Every Sunday the holy communion of the Lord's supper has been celebrated. When he was in New York he seldom failed to attend those week-day evening services, and never missed the Sunday communion. The primary importance of the religious work was not merely inculcated as a principle, it was unremittingly upheld in practice.

Our Pastor believed in the evangelistic power of the ordinance of baptism. He believed that the simple spectacle of that primitive Christian rite, its spiritual significance once understood, roused a sense of its obligation, of the privilege it offered, the blessing it promised. He used to say, *The way to have baptisms is to have baptisms*. And for years we had them every Sunday night. There was no difficulty, and no make-believe, about finding candidates. They came freely. And they are coming still. Our foreign mission is now no longer to the French, who have left our neighborhood, but to the Italians, who are swarming into it. And only last Sunday evening that extraordinary procession of all sorts and conditions who

filed around the church for nearly an hour in the afternoon for a last look at the dead face of their adored Pastor—only last Sunday evening—that immense assemblage of mourners had its consoling contrast in the baptism of two bright young men from our Italian mission.

So the religious emphasis is still put upon our activities here because deepest of all others it lived and stirred in Edward Judson's soul. It was *that* made him the eloquent, inspiring, winning preacher he was at his splendid best. It was *that* gave us the sermons on John's gospel, and on "Gleaming Passages in Romans," and on "Lanes of Light in the Apocalypse," and the "Studies in Isaiah," and many others, which we shall be richer all our lives for having heard.

No Bible scholar was more familiar with the "Higher Criticism" and the so-called "New Theology" than Edward Judson, or more hospitable to any fresh and sound thought these discussions had to offer. He found no difficulty in giving their well-established results, informingly and helpfully, to his congregation. *He never found it necessary, however, in doing so, to shock devout feeling or to shatter faith.*

Let me give you a few sentences from Phillips Brooks's sermon on "Keeping the Faith," because they accord so perfectly with our wise Pastor's mind and method on this point. The great

preacher has been dwelling on "the harmony of constant growth with unimpaired identity," in our mental and spiritual natures as truly as in our bodies. He goes on thus to enforce and illustrate his thought: "You teach your little child some simplest truth about the Saviour. And the child dies and goes to heaven, and knowledge comes into the glorified mind in unknown ways. God is its teacher. Love is its education. Unguessed works for the Father's glory develop and enrich it. It sees Christ and learns more and more of Him to all eternity; and yet, to all eternity your child, looking back over the richness of the knowledge that has come, sees that it is all one with that first truth learned at your knee, and sums up all eternity in this one confession, this one tribute of thankfulness to God: 'I have kept the faith.'"

Like all the shining heroes of Christian history, Edward Judson had in his nature a deep, sane religious mysticism. I once heard him preach—it must have been years ago, but the impression of it remains undimmed—on "The Life Hid with Christ in God." He made it real to us because it was so real to him, the very source and sustenance of his spiritual being. He walked with God. He understood what Thomas à Kempis meant by "familiar friendship with Jesus," and Jeremy Taylor, by "the practice of the presence of God." When he examined himself, "proved his own self"

(II Cor. 13, 5), that is, when he questioned his own deepest consciousness, he knew that Jesus Christ was in him, the will of his will, the very soul of his soul. Often, I am sure, he made his own the words of Tennyson:

“Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood Thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them Thine.”

Matthew Arnold might have been thinking of him, when he wrote his sonnet entitled *East London* especially the first part of it:

“’Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead,
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal
Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows
seen
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.
I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
‘Ill and o’erworked how fare you in this
scene?’
‘Bravely,’ he said, ‘for I of late have been
Much cheered by thoughts of Christ the living
bread.’”

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,”
the voice from heaven said to John in his apocalyp-

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tic vision. And the Spirit answered, "Yea, that they may rest from their labors." Precious words of comfort that have been like balm to us in our supreme bereavement as a church! But let us remember that the Divine Voice added: "and their works shall follow them." Shall these prophetic words be true of this great man, great genius, great Christian we have had for so many years as our Pastor?

We have got something to do to bring that prophecy to pass for him. We can no longer leave everything to him, lazily assuring ourselves that he will somehow "put it over," as he always did. Perhaps his leaving us is God's way of leading us. Perhaps the time had come when he could do more for this church by dying than by continuing to live. Are we going to rise to our great occasion, or are we going to fall into the suicidal apathy of despair? The question answers itself, brothers and sisters of the Judson Memorial. We are going to be brave and faithful, loyal as never before to our Church and to him who, being dead yet speaks to us.

Help us, O Comforter and Guide, to do well our part, for the glory of God and in loving memory of Edward Judson.

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